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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

All media led with reports that Eden Natan-Zada (also known as Tzuberi), 19, a newly religious Jewish soldier who went AWOL several weeks ago in protest over the disengagement plan, opened fire Thursday evening in a bus in the Arab town of Shfaram, killing four people and wounding 12 others. Natan-Zada was originally from Rishon Letzion, but apparently recently moved to the West Bank settlement of Tapuah, home to many sympathizers of the outlawed far-right movement Kach. The gunman was beaten to death by an angry mob that stormed the bus. Both Yediot and Maariv bannered: "A Jewish Terrorist." The media cited a statement by PM Sharon, which called the attack "a sinful act by a bloodthirsty terrorist." Leading media reported that the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee has proclaimed a general strike in the Arab sector.

All media reported that the demonstrations of the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements in the Territories crumbled Thursday as most of the protesters went home, leaving only small clusters of activists. Protests are to resume on Sunday. Ha'aretz notes that the Yesha Council promised that it still has a "doomsday weapon."

Yated Ne'eman and other media quoted Palestinian sources as saying that Israel and the PA have agreed that the evacuation of northern West Bank settlements planned under the disengagement plan will be completed by mid-September. Leading media quoted Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei as saying Thursday that the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank is a step toward liberating Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Post reported that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz told reporters in Aqaba that Israel would allow Jordan to send officers to train Palestinian security forces in Samaria (the northern West Bank), but that he said the issue was not discussed with King Abdullah during their meeting on Thursday. The newspaper quoted security officials as saying that Israeli and Jordanian officials are expected to hold bilateral talks on a number of strategic issues in the coming weeks.

Jerusalem Post reported that the state on Thursday promised the High Court of Justice it would implement demolition orders after disengagement against nine permanent dwellings built illegally in the Samaria outpost of Arnona.

Jerusalem Post cited the Shin Bet as saying Thursday that an Israeli Bedouin allegedly involved in smuggling weapons from Sinai via the Negev top weapons dealers in the West Bank was arrested by Israeli security forces on July 14.

Ha'aretz and other media reported that on Thursday, a federal grand jury in Alexandria, Va., indicted former AIPAC officials Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman on charges they received classified national defense information from Pentagon analyst Lawrence (Larry) Franklin. Ha'aretz reported that the U.S. authorities are interested in questioning additional Israeli Embassy employees, including the Ambassador.

Yediot reported that the Spanish government intends to convene all Middle East leaders, including Sharon and Syrian President Bashar Assad, to a summit conference

in Madrid in November. The newspaper cited the Spanish government's hope that, should the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip be successful, the conference would serve the leaders as a jumping point for the resumption of the peace process.

Yediot reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas has invited the Arab leaders to a summit conference in Gaza after the disengagement.

Yediot reported that Israel's Ambassador to Mauritania Boaz Bismuth met Thursday with that country's new president, Col. Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, who promised that relations with Israel would continue as usual.

Jeremy Issacharoff, incoming No. 2 at Israel's Embassy in Washington, was quoted as saying in an interview with Ha'aretz (English Ed.): "The relationship [between Israel and the U.S.] is strong and vibrant, and we have a tremendous amount of common strategic interests. We will deal with difficult issues as they arise and hope to be able to put them behind us as quickly as possible."

Mideast:

Summary:

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "'A filthy criminal,' Zvi Hendel, one of the leaders of the movement against the disengagement, called the murderer from Shfaram.... But those who ride a tiger have to remember that the tiger has teeth."

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "[The Shfaram murderer] is not alone. There are hundreds like him, perhaps thousands.... In order to win ... we have to take off the gloves and wipe out the pestilence."

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who's fully committed to disengagement, must remove his gloves and clarify to his erstwhile friends that the die is cast, and that he won't let madness prevail."

Ha'aretz editorialized: "[Israel and Jordan] share a common regional outlook that is based on a central role for the United States and on an uncompromising battle against terrorism. It is this model on which Israel should base its relations with Egypt."

Senior op-ed writer Akiya Eldar commented in Ha'aretz: "Abu Mazen needs the importation of American pressure on Sharon, so that the latter will promise a close connection between the Gaza Strip and the outside world and an open passage to the West Bank. This mission has been delegated to special envoy James Wolfensohn."

Block Quotes:

I. "Not Insane"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (August 8): "Let us not dwell in illusions: [Shfaram] suicide bomber Natan-Zada was not insane. His plot was simple, logical, almost called for. He believed that by committing a terror attack on citizens in the Arab sector he could ignite a blaze that would prevent the implementation of the disengagement plan. Either the acts of revenge that the Arabs would do to Jews would create an atmosphere that would stop the evacuation, or these acts would preoccupy so many army and police forces that carrying out evacuation would become impossible. And perhaps both.... 'A filthy criminal,' Zvi Hendel, one of the leaders of the movement against the disengagement, called the murderer from Shfaram. There is no doubt that this is how all his friends feel. But those who ride a tiger have to remember that the tiger has teeth. The speeches made this week from the stages in Sderot and Ofakim were riddled with incitement, with inflammatory rhetoric, with deep scorn for the state and for its laws. The rabbis and the politicians of the Right have to take into account that among their listeners there could be a Zada, a [Yigal] Amir, a [Baruch] Goldstein."

II. "The Murderer Is Not Alone"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (August 8): "[The Shfaram murderer] is not alone. There are hundreds like him, perhaps thousands. Secret polls conducted recently for state institutions show a dramatic increase in the number of Israelis who are willing to take violent action by themselves, in order to halt the disengagement. The numbers are terrifying, mainly among the national religious public (although it must be stressed that most of that sector of society is peace-loving and law-abiding).... If the prophecies of doom come true, the massacre in Shfaram could be a pale harbinger of what is still to come.... The irrational of all religious denominations are gathering, plotting to blow up everything over our heads. All that is lacking is a tiny spark ... and a catastrophic chain reaction will be set off.... Everything is permissible, for this situation is called a war. In order to win it we have to take off the gloves and wipe out the pestilence."

III. "Madness Will Not Prevail"

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (August 8): "The abominable murder in Shfaram, which cost the lives of four passengers on a bus in the sector that is the most loyal to Israel is the direct result of the swirl of hatred that the Yesha Council of Jewish Settlements in the Territories has introduced into Israel.... One must hope that the government and the Israeli Arab leaders will join forces to prevent the expansion of the cycle of hatred and revenge. If this fire isn't put out at once, the fanatics of the Land of Israel [Israel, including the territories] and its insane leaders will be the big winners. Instead of making a step toward peace with the Palestinians, we would return to the days of rioting and to lethal civil war.... Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who's fully committed to disengagement, must remove his gloves and clarify to his erstwhile friends that the die is cast, and that he won't let madness prevail."

IV. "The Philadelphi-Jerusalem-Cairo Route"

Ha'aretz editorialized (August 8): "On Thursday, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz visited Jordan as the guest of King Abdullah II. This is routine, and yet it reflects the stability of Israel's relations with the Hashemite kingdom. Israel and Jordan are security partners. They share a common regional outlook that is based on a central role for the United States and on an uncompromising battle against terrorism. It is this model on which Israel should base its relations with Egypt, the only Arab nation that preceded Jordan in making peace. The security agreement Israel and Egypt are now striving to achieve is intended to allay the fears about what could happen along the line that divides Rafah, the Philadelphi route, which is also the Palestinian Authority's border with Egypt. As the evacuation of Israeli bases, forces and settlers approaches, the need for close security cooperation with Egypt grows stronger. Egypt has agreed to ensure that the long Philadelphi route does not serve as a wide gateway for smuggling weapons that could be used against Israel.... But this does not mean that we need no longer keep a close watch on what happens on, above and underneath the route.... Those who fear that the Egyptian forces' deployment along the border will make terrorist activity easier, should remember Egypt's important role in bringing about the calm that is making the withdrawal possible, and its own war against terror. This is a welcome cooperation. It establishes the expanding regional peace camp that includes not only Egypt, Israel and Jordan, but also states like Tunisia, Qatar and Morocco. The Philadelphi route could be an important axis in strengthening this camp."

V. "Abu Mazen's Surprise"

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar commented in Ha'aretz (August 8): "Quiet depends on a victory by the pragmatic Palestinian camp over the Muslim fanatics. This will not happen if Hamas, which has already claimed for itself the credit for pushing Israel out of Gaza, also pushes out the PA. Abu Mazen's last visit to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon convinced him that at best, Sharon doesn't care whether Hamas gains control of the Gaza Strip. However, Sharon does care that Bush be satisfied, and Bush cares that The New York Times won't report on his friend Ariel's contribution to the victory by Hamas, an organization that appears on the American terror list. In Washington, too, they have begun to cast doubt on Sharon's readiness to help Abu Mazen in a fight against the common foe. However, Abu Mazen has repeatedly stated that he will not hesitate

to use force against any element that tries to sabotage the disengagement plan, that is to say --- the American interest. Yet in order to prevail over Hamas, it is not enough that the Americans force Sharon to let several truckloads of ammunition and the Bader Force unit of the Jordanian Army into the Gaza Strip. Before he makes use of these, if at all, against 'the brothers' who uprooted the Israelis from Palestinian territory, the PA must harvest the fruits of the disengagement. The fruits are orderly governance, effective services and above all -- employment. Even in this case Abu Mazen needs the importation of American pressure on Sharon, so that the latter will promise a close connection between the Gaza Strip and the outside world and an open passage to the West Bank. This mission has been delegated to special envoy James Wolfensohn."

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